

---

---

**BUDGET WORKGROUP REPORT**

**ON**

**THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT**

---

---

**NOVEMBER 2004**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
	BACKGROUND .....	3
	MAJOR FINDINGS .....	3
	RECOMMENDATIONS .....	3
<b>II.</b>	<b>DSD OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>SCOPE OF REVIEW .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
	1.    INVESTMENT IN THE WORKFORCE .....	7
	TRAINING AND ACCOUNTABILITY .....	7
	CUSTOMER SERVICE .....	10
	RESOURCES .....	12
	COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION .....	13
	WORK ENVIRONMENT .....	15
	2.    IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC .....	16
	3.    COMPLETION OF CURRENT INITIATIVES .....	17
	4.    ROLE OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE .....	20
	5.    CODE CHANGES.....	21
	Attachment: Budget Workgroup Recommendations Matrix .....	24

## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **BACKGROUND**

Each year the City Council appoints a budget workgroup to review one City department in depth and determine its efficiency and effectiveness. At the conclusion of its review, the Budget Workgroup reports its findings and recommendations to the Rules Committee. The Mayor appointed the following Councilmembers to serve on the fiscal year (FY) 2004 Budget Workgroup to examine the budget and operations of the Development Services Department (DSD).

- **Scott Peters, Chair**  
Council District 1

- **Deputy Mayor Toni Atkins**  
Council District 3

The DSD Budget Workgroup was supported by Tina Christiansen, former DSD Director; Gary Halbert, Acting DSD Director; and various DSD staff. Additional support was provided by the City Manager, Auditor and Comptroller, and Financial Management departments. The Municipal Employees Association (MEA) was represented at all meetings.

### **MAJOR FINDINGS**

The DSD Budget Workgroup focused on five areas that should be the department's priorities for service improvement: Investment in the Workforce; Improve Communication with the Public; Completion of Current Initiatives; Role of the Technical Advisory Committee; and Code Changes.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Following is a summary list of recommendations that address the five areas listed above:

#### **Investment in the Workforce:**

- **Training and Accountability**-Provide staff with additional training opportunities, complete the development of the web-based "Road Map", and track core performance measures which provides additional rewards for high performers and enforce accountability for low performers
- **Customer Service**-Continue implementation of the Customer Service Initiative, add a Customer Service Manager, develop a Customer Bill of Rights and increase on-line services
- **Resources**-Provide resources to invest in additional staffing, enhancements to the Project Tracking System, and technology
- **Communication and Coordination**-Improve communication within the department and with other departments involved in the development process
- **Work Environment**-Perform feasibility studies to acquire additional space, and improve the environment for both employees and customers

**Improve Communications with the Public**

- Use Development Project Managers as liaisons with community planning groups, develop additional outreach programs, and enhance the department's website to provide for additional public awareness

**Completion of Current Initiatives**

- Prioritize current initiatives along with Workgroup recommendations into a consolidated work plan

**Role of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)**

- Include TAC recommendations on proposed development process policies or regulations

**Code Changes**

- Select regulatory relief items identified in the Zero-Based Management Review report and provide the staffing necessary for code revisions

## **II. DSD OVERVIEW**

DSD's Mission Statement is:

*"To excel in community and customer services through enhancement of San Diegans' quality of life, to ensure safe development, and to provide timely and effective management of the process."*

DSD is responsible for managing the majority of construction, development project review, permitting, and inspection services for the City of San Diego. The Department operates as a self-sufficient enterprise fund on a "fee-for-service" basis with over 40,000 customers a year. DSD has a FY 2005 budget of \$60.9 million, which includes 538 positions. The Department is organized into six divisions and one agency as listed below:

- **Building and Safety** - This Division manages the building development process and maintains public safety through the review of proposed building designs for compliance with adopted standards of building and fire safety. It also provides customer service through education and interpretation of the codes and serves as staff to the Building Board of Appeals and Advisors. In addition, it provides for the scheduling and on-site inspection of completed work, and assigns structural, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and combination specialists to conduct inspections. Combination inspectors are responsible for the inspection of all construction related to single-family and duplex dwellings.
- **Information and Application Services** - This Division provides for the review of construction permit applications for compliance with building and zoning codes and other regulations; issues permits for building, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, water and sewer connections and services, minor public right-of-way, building demolition or relocation permits; provides maintenance of active and archival records; assists customers with records information; and provides development information to the public.

- **Land Development Review** - This Division is responsible for determining if a proposed development project complies with state and local land development policies and regulations. It is also responsible for implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act on behalf of the City of San Diego.
- **Management** - This Division provides direction, policy, planning, coordination, and organizational control for the operating programs.
- **Project Management** - This Division is responsible for managing the development review process for private and public projects. Project Managers are assigned to projects that require discretionary or certain complex ministerial approvals. Project Managers provide a single point of contact for project applicants.
- **Support Services** - This Division provides centralized administrative, financial, information technology and geographic mapping systems support to operating divisions. It also provides information to the public and the media about the Department's services.
- **Solid Waste Local Enforcement Agency** - This State-mandated agency is certified by the California Integrated Waste Management Board to enforce federal and state laws and regulations for the safe and proper handling of solid waste.

DSD was formed in FY 1995 to consolidate similar development review functions, such as plan review and inspection services, into a single department to facilitate one-stop service and provide better coordination and predictability in the processing of development applications. The formation of this Department was pioneered by the City of San Diego and few cities have implemented this type of organization.

### **III. SCOPE OF REVIEW**

The DSD Budget Workgroup met on five separate occasions to develop a deeper understanding of the department, obtain customer and stakeholder input, and develop recommendations for implementation by the department. The following information was presented:

- Department history, overview and issues
- Detailed review of the development review process and demonstration of DSD's Project Tracking System
- Permit process tours of DSD
- Two consultant reports, the Maximus Inc., Report and the 2004 Zero-Based Management Review Report, with findings and recommendations on the department's efficiency and effectiveness
- Public testimony from several community planning groups, the Technical Advisory Committee, the Municipal Employees Association, the San Diego

Taxpayers Association, the Economic Development Association, the Building Industry Association and the Small Business Advisory Board

During the past 12 months, the department has undergone several efficiency and effectiveness reviews by various oversight groups in addition to independent organizational reviews performed by Maximus, Inc. and the Zero-Based Management Review team. These oversight groups provide ongoing feedback to the department and include the Technical Advisory Committee, Land Use and Housing Committee, Economic Development Corporation and the Small Business Advisory Board. The collective efforts of these reviews have resulted in 185 separate recommendations that are currently being worked on by the department; are listed for future work efforts; or have been completed.

One of the greatest ongoing challenges identified in the Maximus, Inc. report is the department's efforts to balance both the applicant concerns with the concerns of community stakeholders. Applicant concerns in the development process include long turn-around times, inconsistency and unpredictability, excessive costs and poor staff attitude. In contrast, some community members believe the process is too rushed, that staff is too supportive of development proposals, and that development and environmental regulations should not be reduced but instead, be increased or more strictly applied. As the City has grown, so have the layers of regulation from the federal level on down, which affect everything from equitable access to height limits to signage. Over time, communities have also worked to manage growth. They have requested regulatory changes to maintain the neighborhood character they value. All sides feel a very strong stake in the process, and this keeps DSD under the microscope at all times.

Conflict between customers and communities can be exacerbated because the land entitlement process requires interpretation and application of various regulations, policies, and guidelines. San Diego's Land Development Code has 77 base zones, each with specific regulations. Complexity of the land development review process increases through the interaction of base zoning regulations with 13 overlay zones, 18 planned district ordinances and 48 community plans.

Based on the information presented during the review, the DSD Budget Workgroup determined the following areas to be the most critical at this time and should be the focus of the first phase of service improvements:

- **INVESTMENT IN THE WORKFORCE**
- **IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC**
- **COMPLETION OF CURRENT INITIATIVES**
- **ROLE OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
- **CODE CHANGES**

## **IV. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***1. INVESTMENT IN THE WORKFORCE***

Five areas were identified by the Workgroup for Investment in the Workforce: Training and Accountability, Customer Service, Resources, Communication and Coordination, and Work Environment. Several initiatives are currently underway, including development of a department/divisional training program, the Customer Service Initiative, and an Employee Survey Steering Committee.

#### **TRAINING AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

##### **Finding:**

The Workgroup finds that DSD staff needs more technical training and cross-training opportunities for the multitude of regulations, policies, and professional practices used in the review of projects. The department also needs to provide additional rewards for high performers and enforce accountability for low performers.

##### **Recommendations:**

##### **Direct the City Manager to:**

- *Provide additional opportunities for technical training and cross-training department-wide. This will include in-house training, technical consultants, and outside training opportunities such as seminars and conferences.*
- *Complete the development of the web-based "Road Map" which details the development process from concept to completion. This will give employees, as well as customers, a comprehensive overview of the development process.*
- *Track core performance measures that are balanced around customer service, operational efficiency, continuous improvement, consistency of review and financial stability. Identify and reward high-achieving employees who are meeting their assigned measures. Enforce supervisory standards and implement training/development plans for low-performers.*

##### **Discussion:**

#### **TRAINING AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Workgroup received briefings from Maximus, Inc. and Zero-Based Management Review members, whose reports indicate the need for training. Department budget constraints from February 2002, to August 2003, contributed to a reduction in training for DSD employees. Staff's technical knowledge and customer service skills were negatively impacted by the reduced department training. In addition, 78.00 positions were added in FY 2004 resulting in a further need for training.

An effective training program will enhance staff's consistency and uniformity in the interpretations and application of land use and building codes. Currently, new employees typically receive 150-200 hours of intensive one-on-one training. The recently implemented training plan for existing employees includes a monthly average of four hours of technical training, such as "Lateral Loads Resistive Systems" and Zoning Regulations, and one hour of general training such as the Public Records Act and ethics training.

Increased employee training will also allow greater employee empowerment to be effectively used in the department. Greater employee empowerment, commensurate with increased employee knowledge of development regulations and the development review process, will result in certain decisions being made appropriately at the employee level instead of elevating those decisions to the supervisor.

#### "ROAD MAP"

The intent of the web-based "Road Map" is to educate employees and customers about the DSD development process from start to finish. The "Road Map" will provide a high-level view of the development process allowing users to obtain detailed permit process information. Development of the "Road Map" is currently underway with all divisions providing input.



Below is a screen view of the draft “Road Map”:

The screenshot shows the City of San Diego's Development Services website. The header includes the city logo, navigation links (Business, City Hall, Community, Departments, Information, Leisure, Services A-Z, Visiting), and a search bar. The main banner features the text "Development Services" and "Managing your land and building development from concept to completion". Below the banner is a "Site Information" section with a "Step-by-Step Development Services Roadmap" and a list of resources. To the right is a "Road Map" diagram with steps: Define Project, Site Information, Entitlement Review, Construction Plan Review, Permit Issuance, Inspection, and Occupancy. A table of links is also present.

**Step-by-Step Development Services Roadmap**

- Custom Home FAQs
- Development Permit Tips for Homeowners
- Residential Addition, Info bulletin-IB 620
- Remodeling Video Information
- Small Business Construction Tips
- Submittal Requirements
- Zoning Information Request
- Zoning Information by Fax
- Building Records Request
- Planning Dept
- SANGIS Geographical Database
- Municipal Code & Information
- Location at DSD

**Road Map Steps:**

- Define Project
- Site Information
- Entitlement Review
- Construction Plan Review
- Permit Issuance
- Inspection
- Occupancy

Custom Home FAQs:
Development Permit Information (DPI):
Construction Permit Tips for Homeowners:
Residential Addition, Info Bulletin-IB 140:
Community Planning Groups-IB 620:
Remodeling Video Information:
Small Business Construction Tips:
Submittal Requirements:
Zoning Information Request:
Zoning Information by Fax:
Building Records Request:
Planning Dept:
SANGIS Geographical Database:
Municipal Code & Information:
Location at DSD:

Development Services Department Home | [Construction Industry Professionals](#) | [Small Business Owners](#) | [Home Owners](#) | [News & Updates](#) | [Contact Us](#)

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

An effective training program will identify core performance measures that contribute to improving department accountability. Through a coordinated training effort, all DSD staff will demonstrate ownership of a unified vision and clear, observable, and measurable goals. By tracking and measuring performance of these goals, staff will be appropriately rewarded or will receive additional coaching, training or resources as needed. By emphasizing accountability to these goals, DSD staff members will take ownership of operational challenges and ensure they are properly addressed. DSD’s performance in relation to these goals will be reviewed regularly. For instance, consistency in project review will be supported by monitoring a department performance measure that requires supervisors to conduct audits of plan checks and inspections. Supervisors will input the audit findings on the Project Tracking System and a report will provide statistics on the supervisor audits conducted.

Training will also enhance supervisors' ability to manage, effectively support, and implement policy decisions. In addition to achieving these strategic goals, focused training efforts will ensure that staff practices and behaviors support the department’s stated values and vision. Accountability will be verified by how effectively DSD achieves specific performance measures designed around these departmental goals.

DSD has developed a “Balanced Scorecard” performance measurement program with input from the Technical Advisory Committee that links department goals to performance. The Balanced Scorecard represents the department’s core measures and will be the primary means of measuring department accountability. The Balanced Scorecard measures will be reviewed monthly by department management and reviewed at least quarterly by the Technical Advisory Committee. Implementation of the Balanced Scorecard performance measures program began on July 1, 2004.

The following Balanced Scorecard measures are being used to evaluate DSD performance effectiveness in the area of training:

- Division training goals achieved
- Supervisors attend formalized City training within one year of being selected
- Employees surveyed believe they have received adequate training to do their job

DSD implemented the Recognition and Rewards Program in January 2001 to provide a simple method for supervisors and co-workers to show staff appreciation and thanks for outstanding work. The objective of the Rewards Program is to identify and encourage high performance, improve customer service, and promote team recognition. This program averaged \$50 per employee in FY 2004.

Employee Development Plans can be developed and used for all employees, including low-performers, to assist in improving performance. Supervisors will be provided with refresher training on how to effectively develop and implement successful Employee Development Plans.

The following Balanced Scorecard measures are being used to evaluate performance effectiveness in the area of rewards and recognition:

- Staff members indicate that they have been adequately recognized for their performance
- Department teams formed to accomplish a specific task are recognized upon achievement of key milestones and/or tasks

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE**

### **Finding:**

A culture embracing quality customer service needs to be established within DSD. This will increase customer satisfaction and employee morale.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Direct the City Manager to:**

- *Continue implementation of the department’s Customer Service Initiative, which includes customer service training through the Customer Service Committee, hiring a Customer Service Ombudsperson, and creating a new customer satisfaction survey*

- *Add a Customer Service Manager position responsible for planning, implementing and managing department customer service improvement initiatives, including tracking of customer complaints*
- *Develop a Customer Bill of Rights*
- *Increase online services*

### **Discussion:**

#### **CUSTOMER SERVICE INITIATIVE**

The Department's Customer Service Initiative includes semi-annual customer service training for staff. In FY 2004, two training workshops were held for each division. The workshops included a panel discussion with a variety of customers who shared their observations on the service they received from DSD.

DSD formed a 22-member employee Customer Service Committee in June 2003. The Committee initiates many of the department's customer service improvements. Examples of the Committee's initiatives include coordinating the Department Customer Service Workshops and implementing an Excellence in Customer Service Awareness Program.

DSD's management and other staff have been meeting monthly with the Technical Advisory Committee customer service subcommittee since March 2003. The subcommittee reviews department customer service improvement and provides input on how the department can improve customer satisfaction.

A Customer Service Ombudsperson was hired in September 2004 to help inexperienced customers, who may need special assistance, get through the development process. The Customer Service Ombudsperson will proactively seek out customers who are experiencing difficulties with the process.

A new customer service satisfaction survey program is being implemented and will be administered by an outside consultant to assess and report on a continuing basis the department's level of customer satisfaction. The survey program will also include updating the department's existing "pick up" feedback forms and developing a web-based customer satisfaction survey.

#### **CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER**

Appointment of a Customer Service Manager will provide critical customer assistance, develop customer service programs, obtain ongoing customer feedback and serve as a sort of "inspector general" with the ability to investigate customer complaints about the process or staff members. The position will report directly to the DSD Director to increase accountability among staff, defuse customer problems before they become acute and affirm the department's customer service commitment.

## CUSTOMER BILL OF RIGHTS

Maximus, Inc. recommended developing a “Customer Bill of Rights” to empower applicants and hold employees accountable. The “Customer Bill of Rights” will explain the California Permit Streamlining Act and the project review process deadlines contained in the Act. Also, the “Customer Bill of Rights” will specify what remedies are available and whom to contact. DSD’s “Guaranteed Second Opinion” is an example of a customer’s right to have a DSD supervisor review a problem and make a second determination on a project review. The “Customer Bill of Rights” will be posted in the department, on the website and via other appropriate means.

## INCREASE ON-LINE SERVICES

Increased web-enabled services for customers are planned for FY 2005. The new services will provide increased speed and convenience for customers and include:

- Official Zoning Map searches
- Paying additional permit fees online
- Scheduling building inspections and viewing results online
- A fee calculator for estimating permit fees
- Project status reports
- Department performance measures and results

The following Balanced Scorecard measures are being used to evaluate performance effectiveness in the area of customer service:

- Customers surveyed rate service satisfactory or higher
- Customer service trainings held annually
- Develop and implement a Mystery Permittee Program in 2005 to monitor and report on the department’s performance and identify best management practices

## RESOURCES

### **Finding:**

Financial constraints for 18 months prior to August 2003 resulted in a lack of adequate staffing, a slowdown in the development of Project Tracking System (PTS) enhancements, and a reduction in technology investments.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Direct the City Manager to:**

- *Use available resources to ensure staffing levels are commensurate with workload*
- *Provide resources for more timely enhancements to PTS*
- *Provide portable hand-held computer devices that provide real-time access to PTS for building inspectors*

**Discussion:**

The revised development fees that were implemented in August 2003, and incrementally increased in May 2004, alleviated the department's financial constraints. DSD will prioritize the initiatives contained in the recommendations, estimate the associated costs and ensure that there is adequate funding as it gets closer to implementation.

**STAFFING**

As of June 2004, DSD was fully staffed. Adequate revenues should be available to hire several additional staff and to provide consultant services to meet workload spikes. Sufficient funding is also anticipated to enhance PTS so that it can better support the development review and inspection processes and increase the amount of data that customers can access via the internet.

**PTS ENHANCEMENTS**

PTS has been fully operational for building permits since August 2003 and for engineering permits since April 2004. Development Services uses PTS to organize customer flow, display project mapping information, support development review and project management, collect fees, issue permits and schedule inspections. At any given time, approximately 600 people from eight different City departments and agencies are using PTS.

Future PTS online customer services scheduled for August 2005, include payment of PTS invoices, land use/zoning information, scheduling inspections and viewing results and a fee calculator.

**TECHNOLOGY**

The department's use of portable hand-held computer devices for inspectors will improve the overall efficiency and accuracy of inspection reports by reducing redundant data entry, inconsistent language, incomplete inspections and data backlogs. These devices will interface with PTS and the geographic information system maps.

**COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION****Finding:**

Communication is inadequate between management and employees and among divisions. Changes in procedures, policies, and expectations are not properly communicated to staff, resulting in reduced morale and customer service. In addition, DSD needs to communicate, on a regular basis, with other departments involved in the development review process.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Direct the City Manager to:**

- *Develop a “Communication Plan” through the use of the Employee Survey Steering Committee to improve communication between management and employees*
- *Designate an Employee Ombudsperson to assist in establishing a clear, open, and objective line of communication between staff and management*
- *Improve communication with departments that work closely with DSD by establishing discussions and workshops on a regular basis*

### **Discussion:**

#### **COMMUNICATION PLAN**

The results of an employee survey conducted in June 2003 indicated the need for communication between employees, management and each division. Based on this survey, a department Employee Survey Steering Committee was formed in February 2004 to represent all divisions in the department. The Committee has a lead role in the development of an internal department communication plan by monitoring the plan's effectiveness and providing ongoing feedback. The Committee meetings provide a forum for division representatives to discuss department issues. To further improve communications, the new department Employee Ombudsperson will work to establish an environment where all voices are heard and valued. The Employee Ombudsperson is an additional resource for resolution of employee issues.

DSD has increased its efforts to enhance communication and coordination with other departments involved in the development review process. Regular discussions will be helpful in identifying problems and developing solutions related to the City's development review process. Among the improvements that resulted from recent workshops with the Engineering and Capital Projects Department was the formation of a project management team responsible for reviewing all public projects.

Increased partnering between Development Services Department and the Planning Department will enhance a greater understanding of long-range planning policies and how to apply those policies to the development project review process. Likewise, Planning Department staff will be provided increased opportunities for frequent and substantive development policies discussions with Development Services staff that will help develop a common understanding of the City's development codes and policies.

In addition, partnering with Neighborhood Code Compliance Department (NCCD) will benefit both departments by reducing conflicts in interpretation of code regulations. Increased communication, cross-training and coordination are examples of partnering techniques that Neighborhood Code Compliance Department and Development Services can implement to improve services to both departments' customers and stakeholders.

The following balanced scorecard measure is being used to evaluate performance effectiveness in the area of communications:

- Conduct annual employee survey, provide feedback to all department employees, and address issues identified in the survey

## **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

### **Finding:**

The Development Services Building is inadequate due to the lack of space, deferred maintenance, and unwelcoming customer waiting areas.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Direct the City Manager to:**

- *Perform a feasibility study on the acquisition of additional DSD office space*
- *Move forward with plans to address the deferred capital improvement needs of the Development Services Center*
- *Commit additional resources to improve customer waiting areas*

### **Discussion:**

#### **OFFICE SPACE**

DSD will have every available workstation occupied by fall 2004. Conversion of a department conference room and remodeling of adjacent office space will enable construction of only eight workstations to accommodate additional department staff. Any future additional office space requirements will require the acquisition of office space at a new location. Inadequate space has become a performance issue for staff who are required to review oversize documents without the proper space allocation.

#### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

DSD pays rent to the General Fund for use of Development Services Center space in the City Operations Building, which includes general maintenance. A major deferred capital improvement need is the repair of the roof. The department has currently been advised by the Manager's office that the Facilities division will replace the City Operations Building roof this fiscal year.

#### **CUSTOMER WAITING AREAS**

Feedback from customers and employees, and the Maximus and Zero-Based Management Review studies, call for improving the physical appearance of customer waiting areas, employee office space and the first floor lobby entrance. Plans are being implemented to replace or clean furnishings in customer waiting areas and conference

rooms. A contract for drywall repair and repainting is being developed. Exterior window washing services and enhanced janitorial services are being pursued, including a “deep cleaning.”

DSD will prioritize the initiatives contained in the recommendations, estimate the associated costs and insure that there is adequate funding as it gets closer to implementation.

## ***2. IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC***

### **Finding:**

DSD should improve communications with community planning groups and the public through education, outreach programs and website enhancements.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Direct the City Manager to:**

- *Create a more effective liaison with community planning groups using Development Project Managers to meet with these groups to address concerns or issues with projects or department policies. In addition, appoint a member of the DSD management team to serve as a “Community Liaison” with the Community Planners Committee to address citywide development policies and regulations.*
- *Develop additional outreach programs that will educate and inform community planning groups and the general public on the development process, services provided, and proposed development projects.*
- *Provide resources to enhance the department’s website to allow for additional education and public awareness of the development process. This will include additional information and documents on public notices and hearings.*

### **Discussion:**

#### **DEVELOPMENT PROJECT MANAGERS**

The land use and building development process can be improved by increasing the availability of Development Project Managers and designating a Community Liaison to work with community planning groups and the Community Planners Committee. These changes would begin to address concerns about the development process expressed at the June 14, 2004, Budget Workgroup public input session. This will supplement the Planning Department’s existing communication efforts.



## OUTREACH PROGRAMS

An outreach plan to further educate community planning groups will be developed. The plan will be similar to the outreach programs that are provided primarily to development project customers. Public Information Office staff has identified target groups for tailored outreach efforts.

The outreach effort goals are to educate the public about longstanding and new department services offered. Services that need additional promotion include single-discipline preliminary review, Homeowners Saturday Service and tools available on the website. Additionally, the goal is to help customers easily access information and maneuver effectively and efficiently through the permitting processes; inspections; codes and regulations; maps and documents; and fees.

## ENHANCED WEBSITE

The Department has used technology to improve the accessibility and quality of information available to staff and customers. The Department's website allows customers to obtain certain types of permits and to make records requests. There are hundreds of different informational documents available to customers online. DSD averages about 25,000 visits per month on its web page. The planned implementation of a web-based "Road Map" that will be beneficial to customers is explained in the Customer Service description of the Investment in Workforce section.

Additionally, there is a desire by community planning group members to ensure improved public noticing of proposed development projects for each community. Enhanced public availability of proposed project details and sharing of information about the development process itself with community planning group members can help to improve the DSD development review process. One outcome of a community forum hosted by Councilmember Peters is that current notices are now searchable by community planning area. DSD will continue to add features to the website to assist the public with navigating the development process.

The following Balanced Scorecard performance measure is being used to evaluate performance effectiveness in the area of education workshops:

- Hold 30 education workshops per year for customers, community members and the general public

### ***3. COMPLETION OF CURRENT INITIATIVES***

#### **Finding:**

DSD should focus on implementing current service improvement initiatives including the Small Business Liaison, Express Plan Check Program Expansion, Official Zoning Map Program, Customer Complaint Tracking and Resolution Program, Detailed Billing

Statements, Enhanced Services at Community Service Centers, and Capital Improvements Program Support.

**Recommendation:**

**Direct the City Manager to:**

- *Prioritize current initiatives together with recommendations from the Workgroup into a consolidated work plan with established timelines. Monitor the progress and achievement of the work plan annually.*

**Discussion:**

The Workgroup acknowledges that there have been extensive internal and external reviews of the department. These recommendations are valuable to the department and should continue to be implemented.

There are currently 185 separate recommendations from other studies and committees, as well as internal and external improvement efforts that are currently being worked on; are listed for future work efforts; or have been completed. The recommendations the Budget Workgroup has identified for improving DSD will be given top priority along with the ongoing efforts from previous studies and advisory group recommendations indicated below. See **Attachment 1**, Budget Review Workgroup Recommendations Matrix.

**DSD Small Business Liaison**

The Small Business Liaison, established in May 2003, provides individualized assistance to small business owners, particularly at the early stages of projects. The liaison consults with business owners to give them direction on zoning and permitting information and provides detailed information on potential building sites through the use of the department's new "Small Business Checklist."

**Express Plan Check Program Expansion**

DSD will continue to expand its optional express plan check service that provides a 50% faster turn-around time, for which there is a 50% additional fee premium charged. The Building and Safety Division now provides full express service for all building plan check disciplines while the Land Development Review Division (LDR) has offered express services for selected land development plan checks. Once LDR completes initial training for recent new hires, it will begin expanding the express services to all review disciplines.

**Official Zoning Map Program**

Current zoning for the City of San Diego is not yet available online. The mapped information was last consistently maintained in the early 1980s, and since that time verification of the current zoning of any specific property requires a time-intensive manual research by property owners and staff. To improve this service, DSD has created an extensive zoning action index which identifies all rezonings for each lot in the City.

The Land Use and Housing Committee recently approved this index as the official zoning map. This map will reflect all current information on the City's zoning actions. Staff will develop a process whereby a property owner, who disagreed with the zoning on the official zoning map, could submit with their project application documentation supporting the difference in zoning.

Copies of the draft zoning maps have been provided to community planning groups to verify, during the months of September and October 2004, current zoning designations against their currently-adopted land use plans and identify any discrepancies. Staff will complete formal responses to any identified discrepancies by January 2005. Subsequently, the map will be developed and made available for review by the public. DSD estimates that a public hearing to consider adoption of the official zoning map will occur at both the Planning Commission and City Council meetings in mid-2005. Once adopted, the official zoning map will be available to the public on DSD's website.

#### **Customer Complaint Tracking and Resolution Program**

DSD is currently tracking statistics on customer responses to department survey cards. The surveys are located at various locations in the Development Services Center, and customers are encouraged to fill these out. All surveys are tracked for comments and service ratings, and customers have the option of including their name so they can be contacted regarding their comments. Each survey is tracked and recorded, and copies are sent to the respective Deputy Directors for their personal follow-up.

#### **Detailed Billing Statements for Deposit Account Customers**

A new detailed account statement was implemented in February 2004 by DSD for deposit account project customers. The new account statements provide staff labor hours and description of work performed.

#### **Enhanced Services at Community Service Centers**

The City currently operates satellite service centers in the following communities: Carmel Valley, Logan Heights/Little Italy, Clairemont, College/Rolando, Market Street (Chollas, Encanto, Valencia Park), Mid-City, Navajo, Peninsula, Rancho Bernardo, San Ysidro and Scripps Ranch. Posters highlight the department's website and how to obtain permit information. Welcome Wagon packages include brochures on the department's Homeowners Saturday Service and Small Business Outreach for new residents and business customers. Information bulletins, flyers, and brochures are also distributed at community events. In addition, Community Service Centers accept and issue "no-plan" mechanical, plumbing, and electrical permits.

The Local Assistance Center located at the Scripps Ranch Community Service Center provides services to people rebuilding their homes after the Cedar fire. Once the permit and plan check services are no longer needed at the Scripps Ranch Center, the department plans to shift those resources to offer permit appointments at the Rancho Bernardo Service Center and the San Ysidro Service Center.

## **Capital Improvements Program Plan Review and Permitting Support**

Over the past year, DSD has been working with Engineering and Capital Projects and other departments to streamline the review and permitting of public projects. The effort has focused on six areas for improvements: Training and education, regulatory relief, staff dedicated for public projects, clarification of roles and responsibilities, early assistance and tailored intake/submittal requirements.

### ***4. ROLE OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE***

#### **Finding:**

The Workgroup finds that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) should expand its role to include review of all proposed revisions to policies and regulations that impact the development process.

#### **Recommendation:**

##### **Direct the City Manager to:**

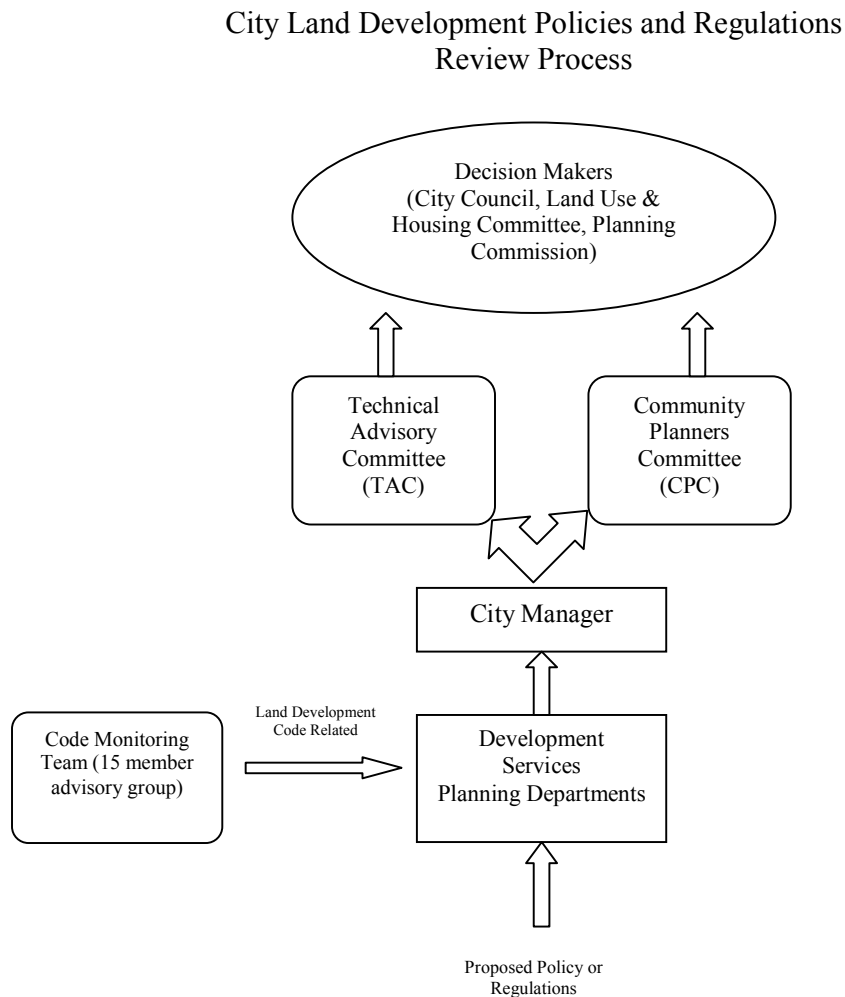
- *Include TAC recommendations in City Manager Reports to Mayor and Council, Council Standing Committees and the Planning Commission on proposed policies or regulations that impact the development process*

#### **Discussion:**

TAC was established in March 2000 and is composed of 17 members who are customers and stakeholders in the development community. This committee, comprised of all volunteers, provides valuable insight into the development process, essentially offering a “reality check” for the department.

TAC’s expanded advisory role will include providing a recommendation statement in City Manager’s Reports related to the development process and citywide planning policies or regulations, a role similar to that of the Community Planners Committee. Future City Manager’s Reports to the Mayor and Council, Council Standing Committees and the Planning Commission would include TAC’s recommendation as well as the Community Planners Committee’s recommendation. This change will help to ensure that the development community is provided an opportunity to state its recommendations on all citywide development-related policies and regulations.

The chart below shows TAC’s proposed role in review of land development policy and regulation changes:



## 5. *CODE CHANGES*

### **Finding:**

The complexity and high volume of Land Development Code (LDC) regulations significantly impact the department’s ability to produce improvements in the areas of consistency, timeliness and cost efficiencies.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Direct the City Manager to:**

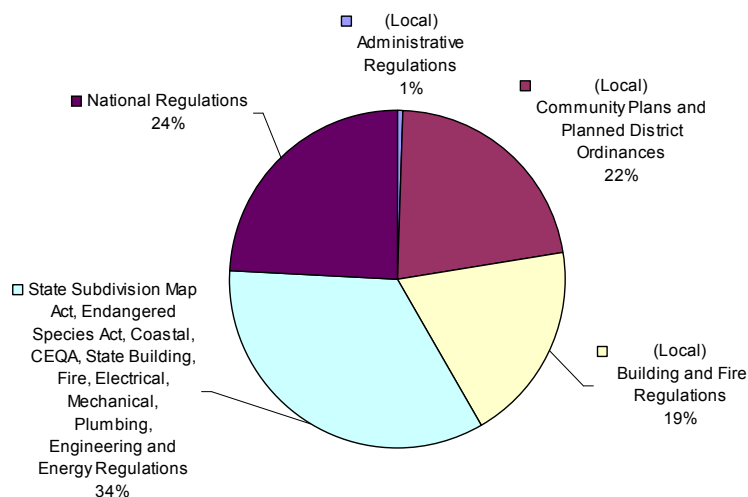
- *Select regulatory relief items identified in the current Zero-Based Management Review report to be included in the LDC update work program*
- *Provide an additional 2.00 positions for the identification and adoption of code revisions and 1.00 position for environmental review support*
- *Develop a formal process for obtaining employee recommendations for proposed LDC revisions*

### **Discussion:**

#### **REGULATORY RELIEF**

The number of land development and building regulations that must be adhered to is substantial. The chart below categorizes the regulations, policies and standards used in the development review process, which number more than 28,000 pages. Local regulations comprise 42% of the total, state regulations represent 34%, and national regulations complete the list at 24%. Naturally, not all regulations apply to every project.

**Development Services Department  
% of Total Regulations By Category**



San Diego's code is further complicated by regulations which apply to only particular geographic areas or particular project characteristics and not citywide. Examples include 18 Planned District Ordinances, 13 overlay zones, including environmentally sensitive lands, historic reviews, flood plains, and airport and coastal issues.

The current Land Development Code was implemented on January 1, 2000. Since its implementation, the code has been updated three times. Further simplification or streamlining of regulations can result in a significant reduction in the time required to complete the land development review process.

The Code Monitoring Team is comprised of 15 stakeholder representatives and assists the City in updating the LDC. The Code Monitoring Team assists staff in the evaluation of code issues and provides recommendations to Planning Commission, Land Use & Housing Committee and City Council.

The recent Zero-Based Management Review report on Development Services recommends modifying or eliminating several code regulations. Development Services and the Code Monitoring Team will review the recommendations closely and report to the City Council Select Committee and Land Use & Housing Committee on the viability of the code changes.

## STAFFING

Currently, there are only 2.00 positions updating the code which significantly limits the number of regulation reviews the staff can address. Increasing the staffing from 2.00 positions to 5.00 positions will provide the capability to review more complex Land Development Code regulations. Examples include:

- Environmentally sensitive lands regulations. Regulations associated with land containing sensitive biological resources, coastal beaches, sensitive coastal bluffs, or special flood hazard areas.
- Previously conforming regulations. Circumstance where a use, structure, or premises originally complied with all applicable State and local laws, but because of a subsequent change in zone or development regulations, is no longer in conformance with the current zone or development regulations applicable to that zone.
- Planned District Ordinances. These ordinances cover 31% of the parcels in the City and are among the most time-intensive updates to complete. Each of the 18 Planned District Ordinances would require an estimated 12 months of a staff member's time to update.

## EMPLOYEE RECOMMENDATIONS

DSD plans to establish periodic workshops to identify potential changes to the Land Development Code. Staff would take its issues to the Code Monitoring Team for review and if approved, forward to the policymakers for a final decision.

The following balanced scorecard measure is being used to evaluate performance effectiveness in the area of Land Development Code updates:

- Completion of items in Land Development Code update annual work program.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Scott Peters  
Council District 1

---

Toni Atkins  
Council District 3

Attachment: Budget Workgroup Recommendations Matrix